

Why had the civil rights movement become so fragmented assignment



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Following King's decision to focus on the northern urban areas, the movement split into factions. Radicals like Malcolm X began to emerge, and differentiation in protest styles began to develop. In this essay I will cover the different reasons for fragmentation, will conclude with my opinion as to the main contributing factor I believe was responsible. Prior to 1966 the civil rights movement showed one key figurehead, Martin Luther King. His Christian roots and peaceful upbringing influenced his tactics; a preference to peaceful protests was seen.

Later tried and tested, King decided these were the most effective. After 1965, the movement progressed north. Peaceful protests yielded less success and King was beginning to lose his key to success, support. Malcolm X was then seen as a new leader to look to, promoting self-defense and black power, the fresh new alternative created an appeal to the civil rights activists in the south. Their contrast in ideology led to tension between groups. The SCLC turned to Malcolm X and many more followed suite. Malcolm X showed a totally different approach to civil rights.

The groups that supported him began to become more radical, undermining the entire work King had done for peace. Ideas were circulated to challenge the US government, and King's support still fell. Following more radical groups beginning to grow like the "black panthers" that used Malcolm X and his ideas to grow their support. As a result of rising tension, the civil rights movement had now split into two main groups, violent and peaceful. In addition to issues regarding peaceful protest, we can say that collaboration regarding the civil rights movement became fragmented after 1966.

A key factor of this was whether to work with whites as King had wanted, or to totally separate under the ideas of Malcolm X. The NAACP and CLC welcomed black and white members, arguing that it had the movement stronger. Despite this, radicals saw potential problems with collaboration. Blacks now believed they needed to liberate themselves, with white help they would be unable to fight their own battles, and that whites had no understanding of their struggles. Groups such as CORE and the SNCC removed all white members, deciding that blacks should make up the majority of the group.

Along with the argument that blacks should collaborate with whites, the integration issues of blacks and whites living together caused some problems and fragmentation between groups. Martin Luther King always believed in cooperation, and many groups supported him in believing this. However King's vision was not always shared. The Nation of Islam and Malcolm X were totally against this idea. Always fearing that whites would try to enslave the black race once again if they lived in the same society. Although, close to his assassination he left the Nation of Islam and changed his mind.

This shows that the integration of blacks and whites was not a huge contributing factor in fragmentation of the movement after 1966.

Fragmentation in the civil rights movement was due to the disagreements over effectiveness of legal change. Martin Luther King was effective with legal protests in the south as there were still legal cases to tackle before significant legislation was introduced. Through legal action King managed to get the 1964 Civil Rights Act passed which was a huge success in his career. <https://assignbuster.com/why-had-the-civil-rights-movement-become-so-fragmented-assignment/>

Disagreement arose when King went north; segregation was not a law, just separation of social classes. Therefore it was difficult to take to court.

Malcolm X was the main figurehead when King moved, his methods were no way near as guaranteed in courts as King had been. Violence and self-defense as advocated. A clash came about when King announced that he didn't agree with Malcolm X's methods. This led to further fragmentation as groups grew further apart in their tactics.

Another reason as to why the civil rights movement became fragmented was due to personality clashes. King preached peace; he grew up with a well respectable family and went through the education system to obtain a PhD. Malcolm X advocated violence and opposition to white superiority. Although King's methods were proven to be successful he gained a lot of criticism and progress was slow. Having different leaders rivaling and opposing each other's tactics caused confusion amongst many African Americans as to who they supported.

The personality clash of different civil rights figureheads was a major contributor towards fragmentation. As well as personality clashes between Malcolm X and King, their views divided the movement further on the topic of Vietnam. Groups like the SNCC were highly critical of the war, they questioned its motives and believed it was more between the US government and Russia than anything else—at first King didn't criticize the war, people began to believe he was being aided by the government to support them.

This caused fragmentation as people began to think King had been bought out. As time went on, King did feel a moral obligation to speak out against the war due to his ideals of peace and the violation of this the war was doing. Malcolm X fragmented the movement by showing despise for the war from the start. With the two main figureheads having initial different opinions this led to supporters of both sides to consider change and fragmentation. In conclusion, I would say that the main contributing factor as to why there was fragmentation after 1966.